

**Montana Lodging and Hospitality Association  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Comfort Inn, Butte, MT  
February 12, 2014**

**Members Present**

- Scott Arensmeyer
- Bryce Baker
- Karen Baker (via phone)
- Rick Cabrera
- Blair Hope
- Mike Johnson
- Maclaren Latta
- Shelli Mann
- Jeff Monahan
- Paula Ruark
- Andy Sabatini
- Matt Sease
- Michelle Skinner
- Steve Wahrlich

**Members Absent**

- Sandra Johnson-Thares
- Regina Rhodes
- Joe Wilson

**Others Present**

- Stuart Doggett
- Charlotte Lauerman

**Call to Order and Announcements**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Paula Ruark at 2:58 pm.

**Agendas / Approval of Minutes**

**Motion:** It was moved to accept the consent agenda as presented. Motion was seconded and approved.

**Motion:** It was moved to accept the minutes of the October 27, 2013 Board of Directors meeting. Motion was seconded and approved.

**Financial Reports** (Attached)

Stuart presented highlights of the actual expenditures versus approved budget and reviewed income and expenses versus the previous year. He estimated a profit from the 2013 Convention of approximately \$5,000 to \$ 6,000.

**Motion:** It was moved to accept the financial report. Motion seconded and approved.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Executive Committee – Paula Ruark & Stuart Doggett**

Stuart brought up a possible sponsorship of the Montana Governor's Conference for this year. He mentioned Voices has already given \$1000 and said options could include the following: foregoing a contribution since Voices' had given a \$1000 sponsorship or providing a sponsorship between \$500-\$750. Shelli noted she would like to have a MLHA sponsorship in addition to the Voices sponsorship. Maclaren checked with Victor about what sponsorships were remaining. A \$750 Networking Sponsorship was available.

**Motion:** It was moved to sponsor a \$750 networking break at the Montana Governor's Conference. Motion was seconded and approved.

Paula noted the need to address the appointments on the Voices committee because Sandi was not able to do it. Currently Paula, Steve and Mike are on the committee and it was

recommended that Matt could replace Sandi. Lucy also resigned and it was suggested that Alex Tyson could replace her as vice-chair of the Hospitality Council.

**Motion:** It was moved to accept the names given as representatives on the Voices Committee. Motion was seconded and approved.

Paula said that years ago the TAC Chair and the Director of Montana Office of Tourism had served as Ad Hoc members of the MLHA board. Members discussed the idea and agreed it should be reinstated.

**Motion:** It was moved to ask the TAC Chair and the Director of the Montana Office of Tourism to serve as Ad Hoc members of the MLHA board. Motion was seconded and approved.

### **Membership / Non Dues – Matt Sease, Stuart Doggett**

Matt talked about the need to encourage hotels to join MLHA. He suggested a reduced rate of \$200 to properties currently under construction or construction completed within the last six months.

To determine what current members like about belonging to MLHA a member survey was proposed so speaking points could be gathered when talking to prospective members. Non-members will also be surveyed to determine why they are not members of MLHA.

**Motion:** It was moved to offer the \$200 discount rate to new construction properties and to survey current and non MLHA members to see what value MLHA brings to properties. Motion was seconded and approved.

### **Legislative / PR – Steve Wahrlich, Stuart Doggett, Mike Garcia**

Mike noted that the Voices budget looks good and he's collected 85% of targeted sponsorships. He reported that during Business Days he spoke on the international trade panel and emphasized the bed tax is important and shared the idea that tourism should work to be a service exporter. He's currently drafting letters to Baucus and Walsh and will talk about the impact of tourism in our state.

Steve talked about the guest eviction law and a recent incident with the Marina Cay Resort. The current law is not bad, but needs some refinements. It is recommended property owners talk to local authorities about what they can offer/recommend if eviction situations arise.

Steve also mentioned that two years ago there were round table meetings before and after the primary election concerning what is tourism and what does it mean. He recommends doing a minimum of eight round table meetings this year – two before the primary and 6 after. MLHA could possibly partner with Chambers to help defray the cost.

Steve discussed the recent TAC vote regarding a change in policy for how local CVBs and regions account for ad revenues sales for guide books and their designation as private funds. Members discussed the concern some have with this change in policy.

**Motion:** It was moved to have the MLHA Executive Committee reach out to the TAC leaders to plan a meeting/conversation with the intent of moving forward through this situation. Motion was seconded and approved.

### **Convention / Education – Shelli Mann, Charlotte Lauerman**

Shelli expressed concern to the board that the location of the convention was being voted on by members without many details, including cost.

**Motion:** It was moved to have the MLHA Board select future convention locations and then have the selected property present at the Wednesday morning Membership Meeting. Motion was seconded and approved.

Andy also mentioned including which days participants prefer the convention to be held in the survey we will be sending out to the membership. He also suggested saying goodbye to the outgoing president at the Tuesday dinner rather than the Wednesday morning meeting; and having the incoming president preside over the Wednesday morning membership meeting.

Due to time, the tentative convention agenda and committee discussion will be emailed to the group.

#### **AH&LA , Steve Wahrlich, Matt Sease**

Matt talked about his trip to Washington DC to talk about the Government shutdown and its effect on the tourism industry. He said he was received quite well and that he also met with AH&LA.

Steve mentioned the new AH&LA policy agenda and the revised bylaws and how they're changing. He suggested we talk about it at the new board meeting.

#### **Hospitality Council, Maclaren Latta**

Maclaren noted she is working with Alex on what's the best structure/value for the hospitality council – and what members see as a value of being part of it. She's also looking into how Voices and the Hospitality Council can work together and how do we get the most collaboration. She's evaluating how it all works together and will create a survey.

#### **Sales Council, Carol Eichler**

Carol noted they may possibly change the date of the mid-May retreat in Billings. The council is currently looking for retreat speakers as well as convention speakers. Carol is working with Charlotte to update the website with new testimonials and a letter to new and potential members.

#### **Next Meeting/Adjourn**

The next meeting of the MLHA Board of Directors will be Thursday, May 22 in Kalispell at the Hilton Garden Inn. Meeting Adjourned at 4:50pm.